



Casualty Management Guidelines

by

The Nautical Institute in association with
the International Salvage Union

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202 Lambeth Road, London, SE1 7LQ, UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 7928 1351 Fax: +44 (0)20 7401 2817 Web: www.nautinst.org

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The book has been prepared to address the subject of casualty management guidelines. This should not, however, be taken to mean that this document deals comprehensively with all of the concerns that will need to be addressed, or even, when a particular need is addressed, that this document sets out the only definitive view for all situations. The opinions expressed are those of the authors only and are not necessarily to be taken as the policies or view of any organisation with which they have any connection.

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Foreword



by **Koji Sekimizu**

Secretary-General

International Maritime Organization

Despite the advances made by IMO on several fronts in ship safety that have helped improve the casualty record of shipping enormously in recent decades, accidents do still occur.

However much we try to eliminate it, risk is an ever-present background against which shipping operations are carried out.

But shipping casualties are so few, and so rare, that those who become involved in one usually do so for the first and only time in their professional lives. Rarely is there a bank of personal experience and first-hand knowledge on which to draw. And yet the actions taken as a casualty unfolds and in its immediate aftermath can have a huge impact, beneficial or otherwise, and massive repercussions for all concerned.

This volume, published by The Nautical Institute in association with the International Salvage Union, aims to fill that knowledge gap. Using the unique expertise available to both organisations, it provides a handy digest of best practices and a comprehensive, yet precise, guide to the expectations that will be placed upon Shipmasters and the roles played by others with whom they will be called upon to interact in casualties.

It should become recommended reading for all those who may find themselves in a position of responsibility during a maritime casualty – preferably well in advance of the event.

February 2012

Foreword



by **Capt James Robinson** DSM FNI Irish Navy (Retired)
President
The Nautical Institute

The premise behind this book is a simple one – that casualties are not straightforward and that mariners who find themselves involved in them rarely have previous experience. This slim volume, then, is aimed at giving some practical help to those unfortunate enough to be caught up in a marine casualty.

The Nautical Institute and the International Salvage Union have produced this book in partnership and by combining the expertise and experience of Shipmasters and salvors the outcome is greater than the sum of the parts.

Each chapter gives the background as to what a Shipmaster or crew member can expect from people or organisations that might be involved as the casualty unfolds. Demands can be confusing, contradictory, unclear or a combination of all three. Chapters are presented in a largely chronological order of how a Shipmaster could expect to deal with different people and give an idea of what job each may be undertaking, together with priorities and responsibilities.

All too often the Shipmaster and the OOW face criminal proceedings in the immediate aftermath of a casualty and are removed from the scene. It would greatly assist the salvage effort if Shipmasters and key personnel were allowed to play a role bearing in mind their familiarity with the vessel. The knee jerk response to seek someone to punish should take second place to the requirement for an effective response.

It is to be hoped that this book will be widely read by mariners and that those unfortunate enough to find themselves dealing with a marine casualty will have a clearer idea of why so many demands are being made of them from so many different sources. The book uses the experience of many involved in the process from government officials to salvors and insurers to offer to the wider shipping industry a guide to casualty management and response. It provides detailed information as to what can be expected when a casualty occurs and offers a best practice guide to each of the casualty response participants. Every vessel, shipowners, superintendent and office should have a copy. It will also be of interest to P&I Club members and executives; all Institute and ISU members, Shipmasters and officers, national responsible authorities and local councils.

February 2012

Acknowledgements

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This book is dedicated to the memory of

Lord John Donaldson of Lymington

whose reports **Safer Ships, Cleaner Seas, Salvage & Intervention** and **Command & Control** issued following the *Braer* and *Sea Empress* casualties respectively, have contributed significantly to safety at sea and casualty response, not just in the UK, but worldwide.

Introduction



by **Andreas Tsavlis**

President

International Salvage Union

There has been a trend over past decades towards a reduction in the number of marine casualties and that is to be welcomed. Improved inspection regimes, more effective port state controls, better flag state requirements, improved training and the increased sophistication of navigation systems and aids have all played their part. But casualties still occur and that will undoubtedly continue. Shipping will always carry some risk and that cannot be eliminated.

What has not changed is the dedication, bravery and skill of emergency responders. Few of us will have experienced the harsh reality of salvaging a disabled vessel in massive seas. It remains a difficult and dangerous job that relies on the willingness of individual seafarers to put themselves in harm's way for the greater good.

Effective cooperation between all those involved in casualty response operations is essential for success. The list of those with a part to play is long and all will have a different perspective on the circumstances and all will have their own desired outcome to be achieved. But no one should lose sight of the key objective: To save life and property and to protect the environment. A cooperative, consensual approach is best. Compromise may be necessary. Our interests may differ but we share the same purpose.

My own company produced a comprehensive document dealing in particular with the salvage aspects of casualty handling, but these *Casualty Management Guidelines*, covering all aspects of the subject and written by those at the 'sharp end' with real experience, represent an excellent resource and I commend them to the shipping industry.

Chapter 1

General introduction

By **John Noble** FNI

When a major shipping casualty occurs, there will be a number of reactions depending upon who is involved and where. It is worth appreciating that for many people caught up in a major casualty response, they will never have experienced anything like this in their careers before. Those onboard are likely to be partially traumatised, particularly if the casualty involves major structural failure, loss of life or collision. Even ashore, parties with responsibility for dealing with the casualty may never have experienced the mechanics of major casualty response until it occurs. While all the training that does take place is invaluable, nothing quite prepares a responder for a first time reaction.

Salvage operators who become involved at the ship will have considerable casualty response experience. In certain parts of the world there are also well-recognised systems for official involvement in ship casualties and these often work very well. Examples of these are, in the UK – SOSREP; in Australia – MERCOM and South Africa – SAMSA. In the USA there is a highly regulated pre-casualty response requirement, see Chapter 7.

The human element in any casualty must not be overlooked and should be taken into consideration during the response period.

Invariably, but not always, the first to find out about the casualty are those onboard the ship. A well-trained crew will probably initiate a formal casualty response plan. But circumstances may prevent this where there has been an explosion, loss of life or structural failure. The first priority is always safety of life. Some consider that abandoning the ship should be a last resort, but where the casualty is far offshore and beyond rescue services, this action may be the only alternative.

Communication, where possible, is vital at the early stages of a casualty and it is likely that the ship's first communication, if time permits, will be with the owners or managers. Current instantaneous means of communication mean that the owners' or manager's office is a telephone call away and it is likely that the decisions being made at the casualty will have considerable owner and shipmanager input. Salvage companies have sophisticated means of determining when a casualty does occur and the owner, the manager or the Shipmaster may well then be contacted by salvage companies offering their services, see Chapters 5 and 6.

Even if the ship's communication centre is destroyed, it is likely that the automated EPIRB

system will alert shore authorities that an incident has taken place. Where the crew of a disabled casualty is likely to be heavily involved in onboard response, communication regarding outside assistance is likely to be through the owner's or manager's office or, if they have been alerted, the owner's P&I Club response. Many Clubs now operate a 24/7 casualty response system, see Chapter 8.

In the first instance, the level of danger facing the ship may not be immediately clear. It is vital that the personnel onboard ship report to the owners, managers and the nearest coastal authority, the level of danger they feel the vessel to be in at the time.

When there is a major casualty a number of priorities will become immediately apparent. The first priority is to ensure the safety of life of those onboard. A modern reality is that protection of the environment has become the second priority for those involved. Very often these environmental considerations will outweigh all other immediate priorities for the salvor. The salvor's reward for their services to the maritime property (ship, cargo, containers and bunkers) is decided on the basis of the criteria set down in Article 13 of the 1989 Salvage Convention. One of these criteria is the value of the salvaged maritime property. So the salvor's priority will be to save as much of the cargo, bunkers and ship as is humanly possible. As the casualty response develops, so the effect of the priorities becomes more apparent.

The purpose of these *Casualty Management Guidelines* is to offer all parties to a major maritime casualty response an idea of where priorities lie with other responders.

National and local authorities whose coastline may become affected will be likely to initiate a rehearsed response plan with their own priorities. There will be political pressures if the casualty threatens the environment. Consideration of the need to provide a place of refuge may exacerbate the political response.

Professional marine salvage companies are equipped and able to respond very quickly when an emergency is declared by a ship and they are likely to be best-placed to get to the casualty quickly and to offer on-scene advice to other participants.

Nowadays the high value of cargoes carried onboard many ships will mean that cargo interests will also be taking a keen interest in events, and may wish to participate in the response, either directly or indirectly, see Chapter 8.

The shipowners themselves will obviously have a keen interest in ensuring that the response minimises their loss and invariably the owners' P&I Club will be involved at an early stage. Initially P&I Club involvement may just be a watching brief, but increasingly active participation is a part of the service provided by the P&I Clubs (also Chapter 8).

By inviting contributions from the likely major casualty responders, it is intended that this book will serve as a guide to all involved and enable them to appreciate what happens during the response period. All the contributors to the book have first hand experience in dealing with the response a major casualty requires and have volunteered to use this publication as one means of passing on what they have learned.

Experience has shown that where a casualty occurs adjacent to, or on the shore, many people will turn up at the scene, each with their own priority and each having a specific brief. It is during the first few days of a casualty, when action required is most urgent, that there can be an element of uncertainty as to the roles of those involved. If this book succeeds in explaining such matters, it will have succeeded.



John Noble FNI
Technical Editor

**ABOUT THE
AUTHOR**

John has worked in commercial shipping since 1962 when he joined *HMS Conway*. After obtaining his Master Mariners Certificate, John graduated with a Nautical Studies BSc from Southampton University. In 1980, after a spell as a claims executive with Thomas Miller (UK Club), John set up the London office of Murray Fenton & Associates Ltd. In 2001, following the acquisition of Murray Fenton by BMT John served as Chief Executive Officer of the Salvage Association until 2005. John's practical expertise lies in dealing with salvage, wreck removal and oil pollution having attended some 60 major casualties, including the *Braer*, *Sea Empress* and *Erica*. John is an experienced expert witness recently offering expertise in unsafe port cases and salvage.

He has worked with all of the major salvage companies and served briefly as an SCR.

Until recently, John was an advisor to the International Salvage Union acting as its General Manager.

He is currently a Trustee of the Maritime London Officer Cadet Scholarship scheme, a London-based charity funded by City organisations that provides training scholarships for young people wishing to follow a career at sea.